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### What Is Sacred

Maxwell K. Baum

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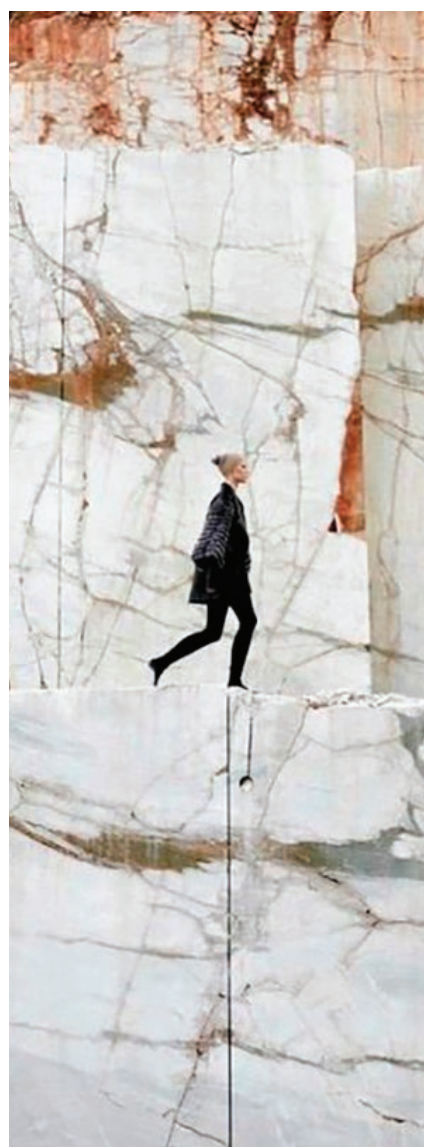
# WHAT IS SACRED

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE









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Sacred space is no longer the realm of the religious. “People develop highly individualized, institutionally unsupported ways to worship. They are more pious than they realize”. Yet this worship is no longer restricted to merely the worship of the divine. Architecture of worship, be it from any great religion, are all “designed for the same purpose of elevating the soul”. Why can other architecture not achieve the same result?

*fig 01: Clyfford Still Museum,  
Allied Works Architecture, 2011*



# INTRODUCTION

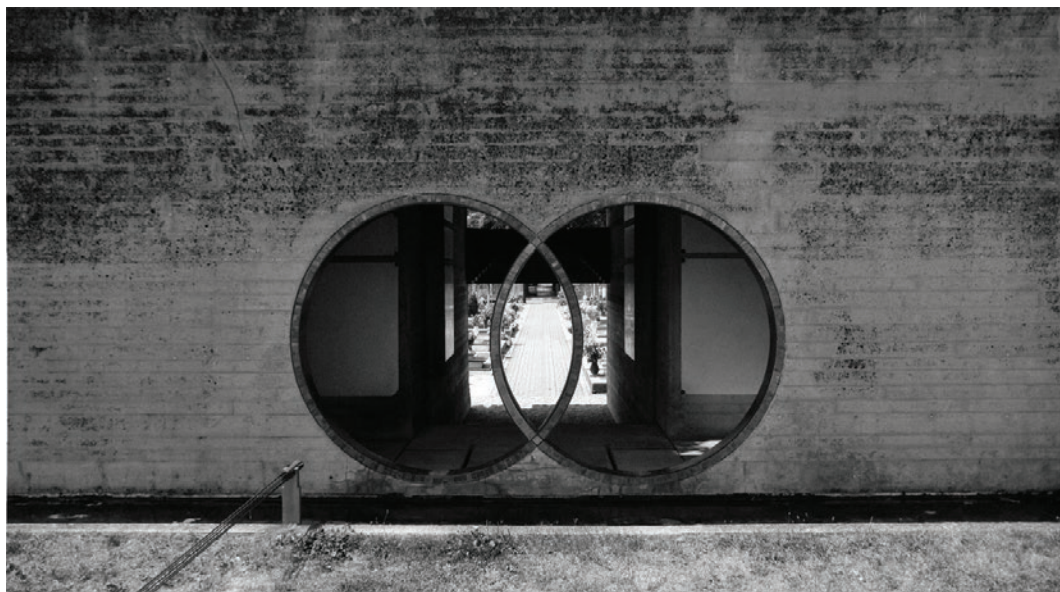
Sacred architecture has always existed. The concept of sacred space has long been synonymous with mythological or religious spaces. No longer is this solely the case, with a much-expanded notion of the sacred, and an evolution in the areas of religion and spirituality, the idea of sacred space has come to encompass a multitude of ideas. The manifestation of sacred space is widespread - religious and secular, individualistic and collective, and rational and atmospheric. Program alone no longer dictates the sacred quality of a space.

Sacred architecture and sacred space serves as a sanctuary for a person, group of people, or an idea. The concept of sacred initially breaks down into two main categories: religious and secular. This thesis will choose to explore the less traditional notion of the non-religious, essentially secular or profane, sacred space. The paradox of the profanely sacred poses an interesting mystery and an equally interesting architectural opportunity. How can one construct a space with no religious affiliation and imbue it with the same devout, ritualistic, and sacred characteristics. What composes this construct? What role does architecture play in facilitating this? What does it mean to be profanely sacred?

*fig. 01: National Assembly Building  
at Dhaka, Louis Kahn, 1982*

This thesis aims to reinterpret the notion of sacred space and explore architecture's role in the creation of sacred space. Stripped of the religious connotations of the sacred, this thesis hopes to create an architecture that balances between the individual and the collective, fosters





both introspective reflection and extrospective contemplation, and proposes architecture for the experiencing of the sacred.

Architecture can serve as the platform for the transcendental experience. This can be achieved through a thorough understanding of criteria this thesis has identified as constituents in creating sacred space. The concept of Le Corbusier's "L'espace Indicible," the ideas of phenomenology and atmosphere, and the concept of a "lived space." Ultimately this project will make sacred architecture and experience out of a normal, mundane, and profane program and elevate the users experience to that of a transcendental one.

*fig 01: Brion Cemetery, Carlo  
Scarpa, 1972*



# THE CONCEPT OF SACRED

Simply, sacred architecture creates a space that allows for the user or users to engage in transcendental thought, practice, or action. Conventionally, these spaces are simply churches, or mosques, or temples, or any other house of worship. Additionally they can equally be seen as spiritual places, such as a yoga studio as an example. Yet, these are restrictive and conventional. Why can other programs not hope to achieve the same effect on their users? Can a “profane” or “normal” program not serve the same function to its inhabitants?

Contemporary sacred architecture instills emotion and thought. It requires of its users an involvement and inclusion in daily practice or ritual. In the opposite sense, sacred architecture emits or transmits emotion to its users: it, in a way, is in direct dialogue with one or with every user. It should speak to them, yet in different, personal ways. It can be with different intensity, from a shout to a whisper.

Architecture can inflect mood, control a situation, and curate experience. It can create atmospheres that are supporting, uplifting, or inspiring, as well as spaces that are suffocating, compressing, or somber. Sacred architecture seeks to benefit its users. This does not imply that its characteristics are merely gentle ones: it too should seek to provide space that humbles its occupants. The main function for sacred architecture, beyond enclosing or defining space, is to elevate its users mindset, spirit, fervor, etc. It equally serves and humbles, always in some form of dynamic relationship with its occupants.

*fig. 01: Ritual Devotion on Display,  
Maxwell Baum, 2016*





Not every space within a sacred space is literally sacred space. This seems counterintuitive, yet is founded on a concept of levels of sacredness within a project: the altar of the church is far more sacred than the narthex or the nave. Some spaces can become more sacred with more people in them, or it is equally possible for the opposite transition into more profane. A space for one can hold the entire weight of the world within its walls, while a large one can simply be homogeneous nothing. One cannot appreciate the extremes or the subtleties without comparison or the “other”.

Levels of sacred architecture have the potential to manifest themselves in essentially any program, so long as it is designed in a way that allows for it to occur. Proper design, form, material, light, texture, smell, taste, and emotion: all need a place in architecture, and all act towards creating truly powerful space. Not all architecture can afford to expend effort or money on all aspects like these, but all must strive to achieve the affect.

Sacred architecture is a luxury, but it is a right.

*fig 01: Leaving the Homogeneous Plane, Maxwell Baum, 2016*





# A HISTORY OF THE SACRED

An idea of “sacred space” has always been intrinsic to man. In a way it began with space that invoked a use beyond basic programmatic need. Edifices were constructed in which to perform rituals, in which to experience and reflect on life, in which to house art, relics, or inscriptions. Over 17,000 years ago, prehistoric man created the Hall of Bulls at Lascaux. Some of the earliest images created by man, they were placed within a large underground, cavernous opening. This is without a doubt a form of sacred architecture and sacred practice. The absolute reason for the painting of these images atop the natural cave dome is unknown but the sentiment is the same: there was a sacred or ritualistic purpose to the creation of these images and the location and placement within them allowed the space to become a “sacred architecture.”

*fig 01: The Hall of Bulls at  
Lascaux, 16,000-14,000 B.C.E.*

During a time when man was literally fighting for survival at every moment, he felt the need to expend precious energy on a superfluous act. Time, thought, and execution were given to a purpose that wasn't fundamental to survival. It must be surmised that the purpose of this action, and many other like it, were done for transcendental reasons. There was meaning behind them beyond the basic survival need: they were human needs, expression, and ritual.

Beyond this, sacred architecture has mainly been in the form of religious architecture. This is a result of religious architecture being the recipient of money: it was where the money went; obviously the religious projects would be the most finely designed and constructed. People



and curated experience to engage with the power and collective strength that they provided. They were magnificently built, truly feats of incredible ability spurred by divine inspiration. They usually had megalithic qualities to them and were able to support use by many people.

*fig 01: New Sacristy, Michelangelo,  
1520*





# THE EVOLUTION OF SACRED

What constitutes sacred space has undergone a sequence of evolution that has gradually included a much wider scope of programs and functions. Each seems to get at a different interpretation of the notion of sacred as well. It began with the religious. Religious sacred space is the conventional understanding and interpretation of sacred space. It features, generally across most (large) religions, a high focus on the collective experience and a collective mind. The architecture historically aimed to impact the human condition and generally featured some of the most advanced and skillfully completed architecture of its time. This is not as much the case today, with a lessened emphasis on religion as a whole. Obvious examples of this are churches, monasteries, mosques, temples, etc.

The second notion of the sacred is the monument, the remembrance, the memoriam. This encompasses the desire to, in a sense, immortalize the events of the past, be them tragedy, death, or accomplishment. Oddly, the most common spaces of this type are dedicated to the remembrance of atrocity or a negative past. They serve as a humbling experience and are rooted in historical importance. Programs such as national monuments, historical places, and mausoleums comprise this category.

The third type, the expanded, begins to blur the lines of the expected. Now, more quotidian spaces are beginning to be pulled into the mix. Large public spaces begin to provide individualized escapes within the city. They encourage a certain aspect of silence and internal action: a

*fig 01: San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Francesco Borromini, 1646*

*fig 02: Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Israel, Peter Eisenman, 2004*

*fig 03: Therme Vals, Peter Zumthor, 1996*

*fig 04: Maison Bordeaux, Rem Koolhaas, 1998*



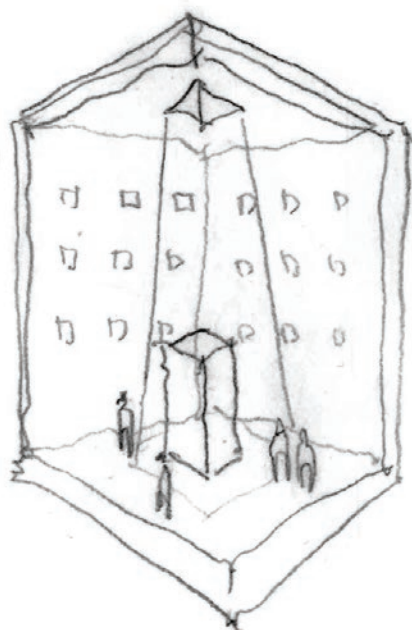


space to withdraw partially from society. Programs such as libraries, museums, and coffee shops may constitute this section.

Finally the fourth and almost quasi-sacred space is the vaguely titled individual space. It is in a way the own personal world: the home, a workspace, the studio. A deeply personal space, everything is fine tuned to the users needs. The user is as much a part of the space as the space is a part of the user.

As the evolution of the sacred expands to encompass more definitions, on the contrary, the number of users for the spaces may arguably get smaller. It still seems as though the more commonplace definitions of the sacred are those with the most body of users. This may likely be because they are easier to define and have more strict delineations between the sacred and the profane: in a way making them more easily digestible and prescribe-able: a visitor knows what to expect and therefore they are more comfortable and accepting. They are less willing to be an individual and risk the failure of achieving a sense of the individual, so the comfort of the norm is more appealing and widespread: it is accepted.

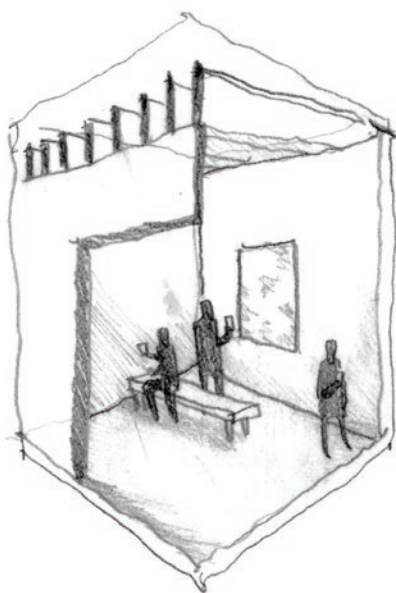
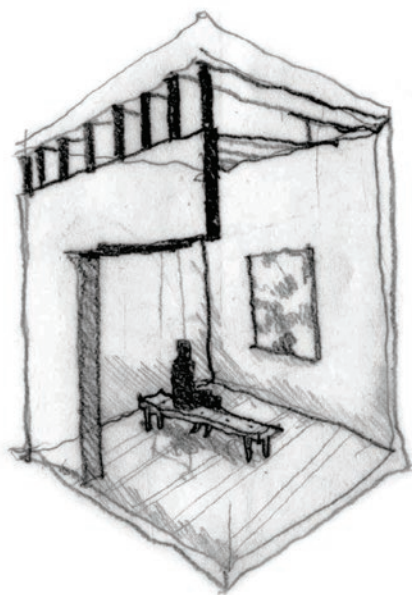
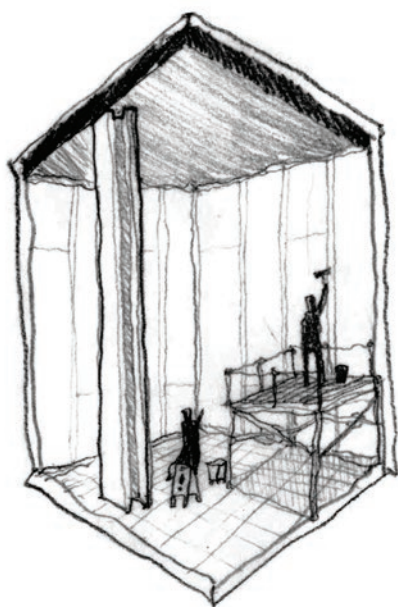
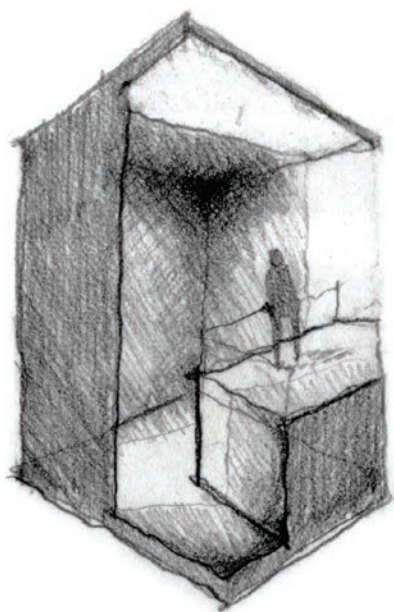
*fig 01: Transcendence into  
Sanctuary, Maxwell Baum, 2016*



# SIMULTANEITIES AND CONTRADICTIONS

What has been held sacred and what is sacred today contain both simultaneities and contradictions. Through architecture and the built environment, one can observe and understand what society holds as sacred. As evidence, the erecting of architecture serves to stand as monument for the values of society. Not all are bad, but some have been devalued and in other cases over valued. All is relative but is a reflection of the society in which they exist.

*fig. 01: Drawing Study on Scales of Sacred, Maxwell Baum, 2016*





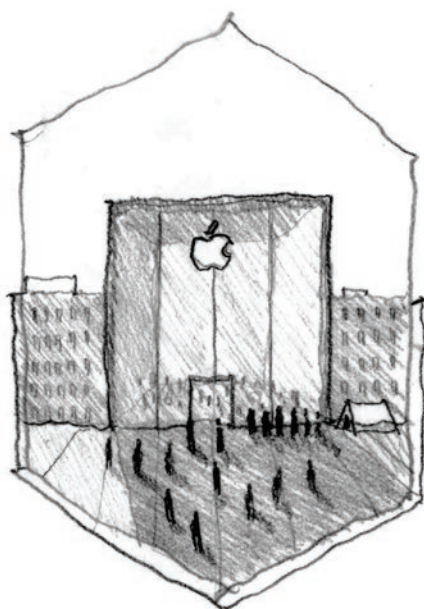
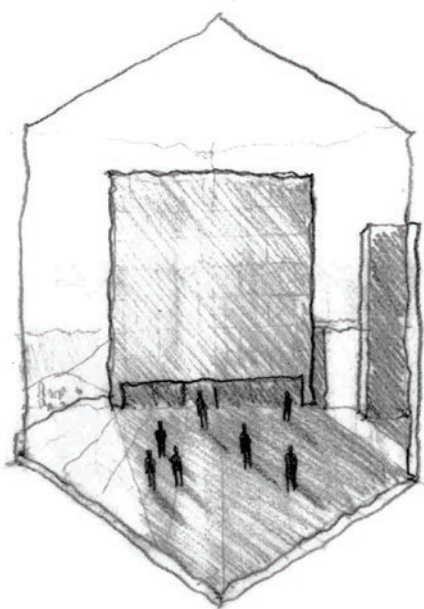
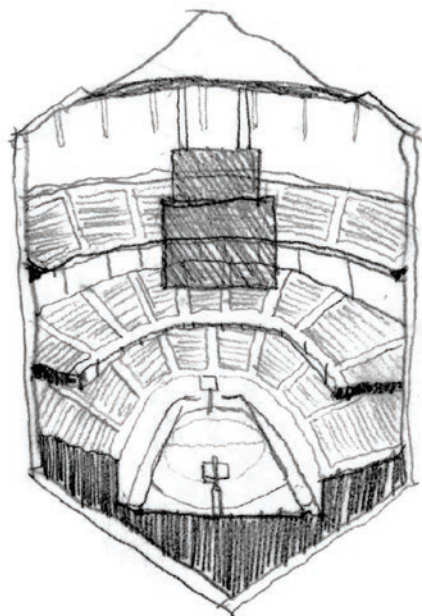
**The Architecture of the Earth** – A stereotomic exploration of space and permanence. Heavy components begin to create an architecture of the earth that implies belonging and longevity. It begins to rise from the ground and become an equal component to its site and situation. Stereotomic architecture manifests in the form of volume. The architecture of the earth brings with it connotations of the archaic, of history, and of classicism and is highly under-represented today.

**The Architecture of Man** – A tectonic expression of lightweight components and enclosure. Light, ethereal and delicate, the architecture lacks the permanence of the stereotomic but trades it in favor of articulation. The architecture of man manifests itself in the form of plane and frame. Today, the architecture of man is the prevalent form of architecture and has been reduced to a commonality through economy and lack of intensive design.

**Art as Contemplation** – The art space, the gallery, and the museum becomes a space of contemplation and retreat. Art spaces act to provide the visitor with an atmosphere ripe for contemplation and reflection, whether it is on the art or other subjects. An understood and expected behavior in the space sanctifies it as a sacred human location. Art itself performs as an icon or artifact allowing for the immersion in contemplative thinking.

**Art as Commodity** – A comment on the state of the museum and art, the creation and the appreciation of it, is that they have become commodities. The sanctity of the art museum is no longer respected as it has been infiltrated by the superficial and consumerist mindset. An art piece is no longer appreciated for its artistic value or merit, but rather as a piece of experience to be collected. They serve simply as the backdrop for camera pictures and social media shares. This ultimately renders the art gallery as a simple continuation of the consumerist world, no longer a bastion of resistance and individuality.



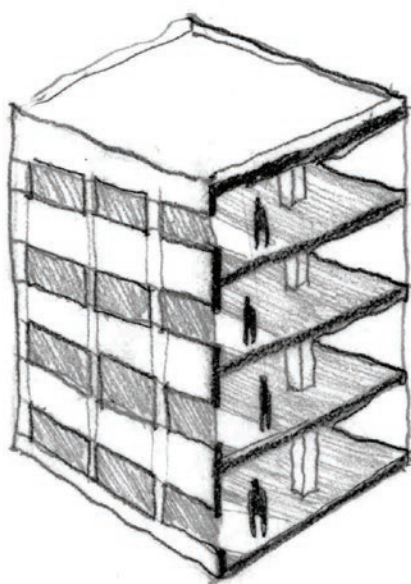
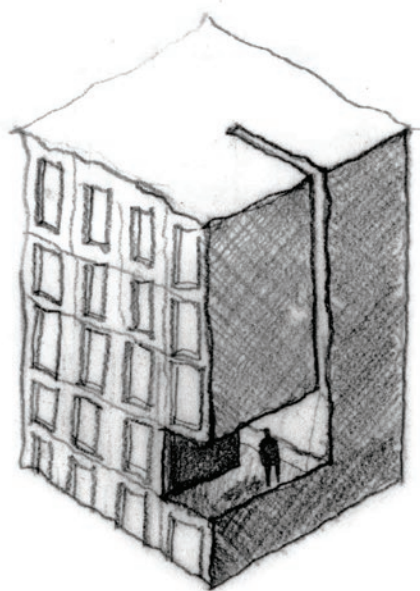
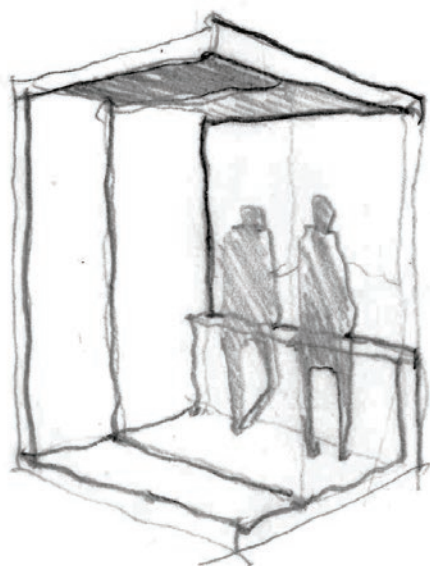


**Faith Congregation** – The traditional congregation space. A large space for the flowing of people, conversation, and oration. Traditionally religious, the space can now manifest in other congregational spaces, such as auditoriums or theaters. This space usually comes with connotations of a megalithic or grand quality by virtue of enclosed space and scale. An emphasis on internal thought and human interconnection is placed on these spaces.

**Fanatic Congregation** – The new societal congregational space: the sports arena. As devoutly followed as a faith, the religiousness of professional sports has come as a reckoning force. With this, naturally, has come the creeping inclination of capitalism. The focus of these spaces is to produce and consume: images, values, and capital. The act of consumption by the public mass is the focus of this type of space.

**The Picturesque Monolith** – An architecture that humbles the human figure. The picturesque monolith serves as a point of pilgrimage within a landscape. It raises above the scope of the city and the human and serves as a bastion of gathering. It connects like-minded pilgrims in a space that provides for the furthering of their collective agenda.

**The Capitalist Monolith** – The capitalist monolith is a space that controls the human figure. Imbued with money, power, and social influence, the capitalist monolith commands a fanatical following of brand and identity. “Followers” perform pseudo-religious pilgrimages to the capitalist monolith upon release of its latest “sermon” in the form of product releases.



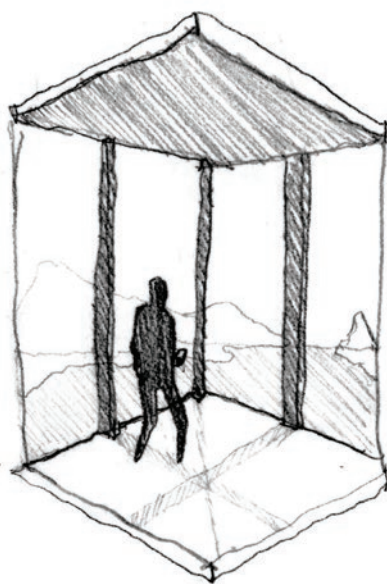
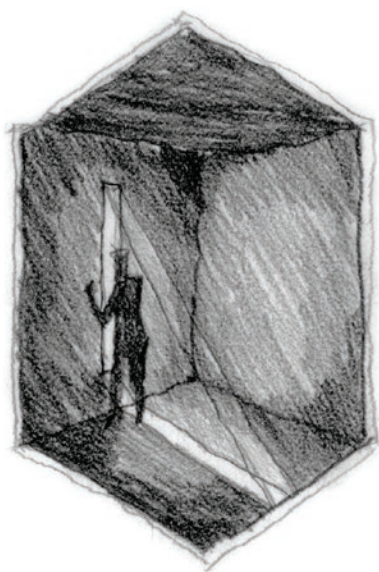
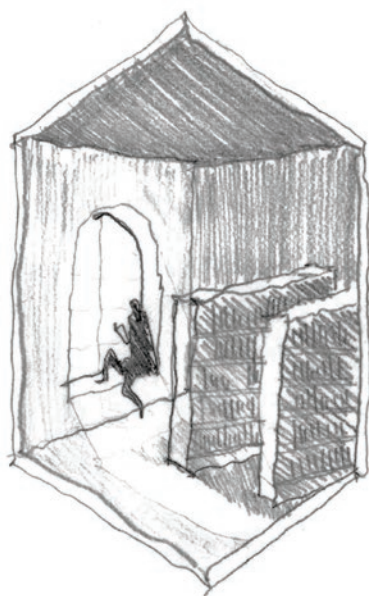
**Intellectual Exploration** – The simple creation of the realm of an intellectual conversation. A landscape, a city scape, either can serve as the backdrop for an exchange of human intellect. A momentary respite from day to day life and the opportunity for contemplation and thought: a place for critical thought.

**Visual Consumption** – The television and its accompanying room provide a space for the consumption of images and ideas. Non-critical, low in substance, and capitalist in nature, a space fit for simple visual consumption is the antithesis of the space for intellectual exploration.

**Spatial Experience** – Simply the deviation from the norm and the generic. The installation of a unique experiential space, through volume, form, material, light, etc. can provide symbolism to the space, elevating it to a function beyond just a space. The creation of a unique volume allows a hierarchy of space to be created within a larger framework. Architecture as designed and as “architecture”.

**Generic (Economic) Construction** – The current state of architectural construction and design. Dehumanizing, uninspiring and generic the repetitive space and motifs create a leveled building with no hierarchy. Architecture as seen through economy of effort and as “building”.





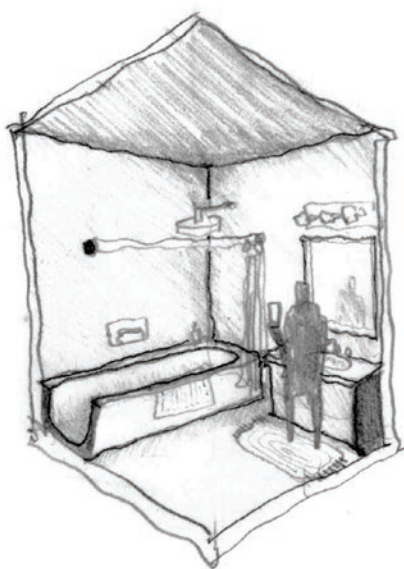
**Personal World** – Carving out a moment in life for the removal from the societal machine. Individual exploration of knowledge, passion, or interest can create a personal space that allows the creator to experience a transcendental experience. In this example, the personal world is created in the act of reading literature, where the user becomes momentarily removed and into a world of their mind: a sacred action.

**Digital World** – Individual time and space seem to no longer exist. The world is now almost inescapably connected and invasive. Literature is falling out of fashion and the digital world is growing evermore pervasive and powerful. Obviously this comes with many benefits but some overlooked detriments as well. There is a lack of ability to be disconnected and self reflective: true alone time.

**In Praise of Shadows (Tanizaki)** – Author J. Tanizaki spoke about the balance between darkness and light, and the characteristics and forgotten beauty of darkness and shade. The use of shadow for comparison heightens the effect of the light and vis-à-vis: the existence of one heightens, through relation, the other. The shard of light invites curiosity and mystery: it encourages exploration and viewing.

**Free from Shadows** – The proliferation of light allows for a light and transparent space. By opening the space to light, it also makes it open to the views towards the outside. But in this opening up, the view becomes less emphasized because it is readily available and always present: it loses its significance and is quickly forgotten into the background.



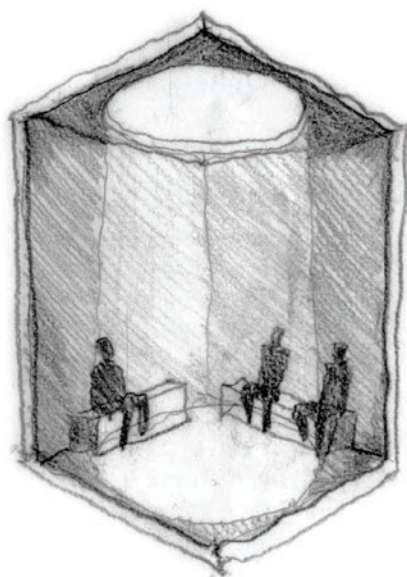
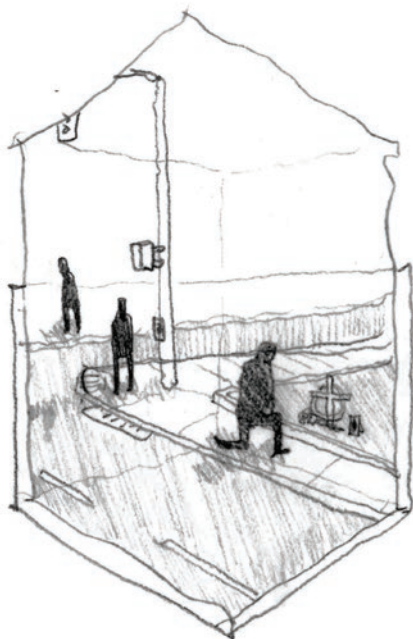
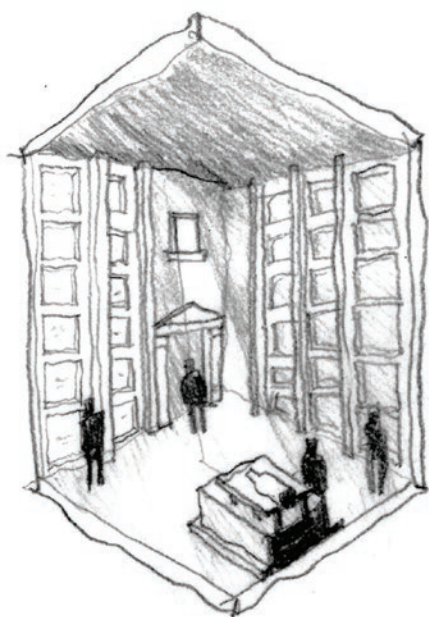


**Reflecting Space** – Individual space for the intended purpose of providing self reflection. The presence of the elements creates a naturalistic setting for the contemplative mood.

**Narcissistic Reflection** – Today's only truly individual space: the bathroom. Even this is proliferated by the need to narcissistically reflect on ones visual identity. The shower can serve as the final frontier of truly individual space, being actually disconnected from the social grid, and provide the user with a contemplative instance.

**The Studio** – A romantic space of human creation. Art as the embodiment of human expression and spirit, the art studio is a temple in itself. Ritual, devotion and toil are common in the creation of ones art and personal reward and critique are present. Isolation can provide a safe space for the adventurous exploration of ones ideals and desires for creation and expression. The space is purpose built and can be tailored to preference.

**The Coffee Shop Studio** – A shift away from a romantic or picturesque image of creation, the reality is much more collaborative, fluid and urban. The surrounding of activity can inspire an equal drive to create and be inspired. The space is inherently not programmed for all the possible uses and is not purpose-designed.



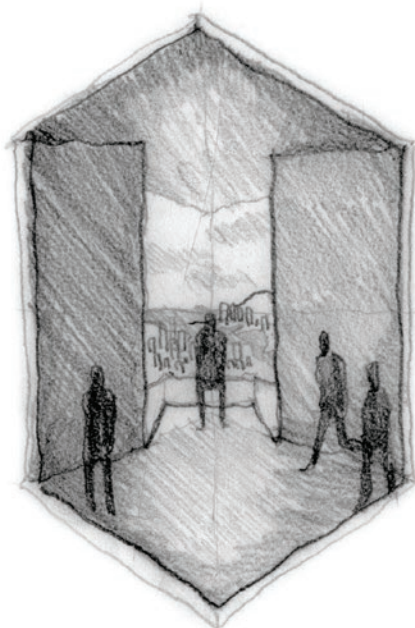
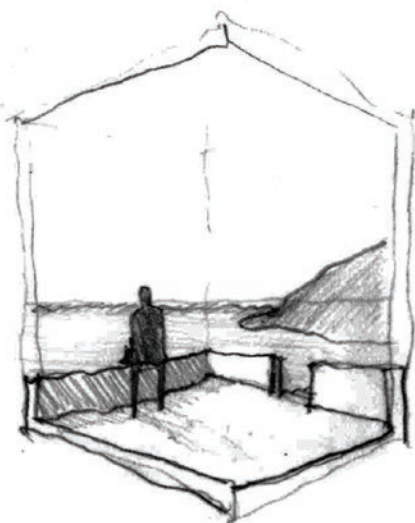
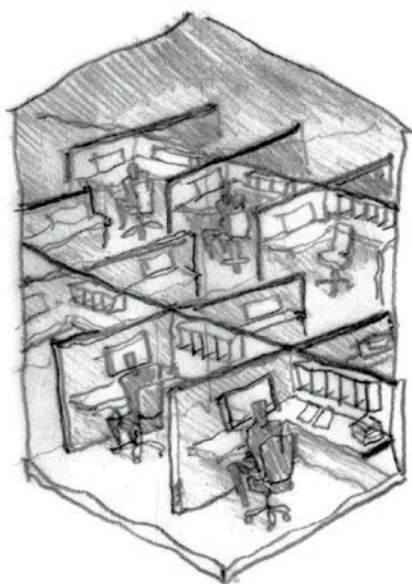
**The Mausoleum** – The mausoleum serves as the sacred space to the dead. An atmosphere of quiet reflection and respect, the space demands a certain behavior. The space of the dead marks the embarking into another world and with it a sacred experience.

**The Roadside Shrine** – The creation of a small edifice and a personal connection to it. It remains ambiguous and non-intrusive into societal perception and is passed by the masses without much thought. A unique instance of polarizing meaning depending on viewer, a large amount of meaning, or simply a passing thought.

**Elemental Skyscape** – The skyscape serves as a direct connection to nature and an invitation to the elements. The power to impact a space with a simple oculus dates all the way back to the Pantheon. It is almost in human nature to be fascinated by it. Natural light cascades into the space and vision is funneled up. This momentarily allows the user to disconnect from their surrounds.

**Florescent Skyscape** – A space that substitutes natural light for artificial light. The artificial light cannot compare to the symbolism and resonance of the natural. Executed correctly, the space generally achieves usability but does not elevate the space in a meaningful way.





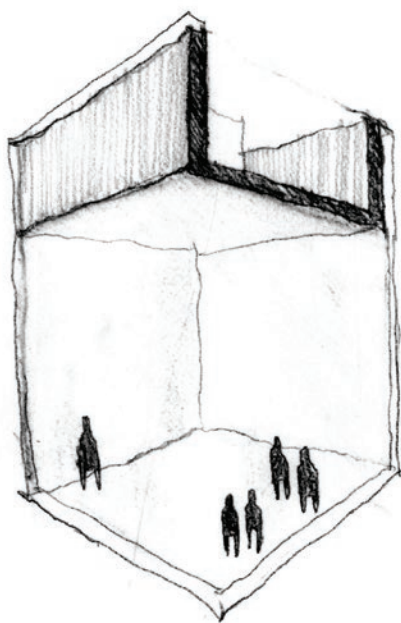
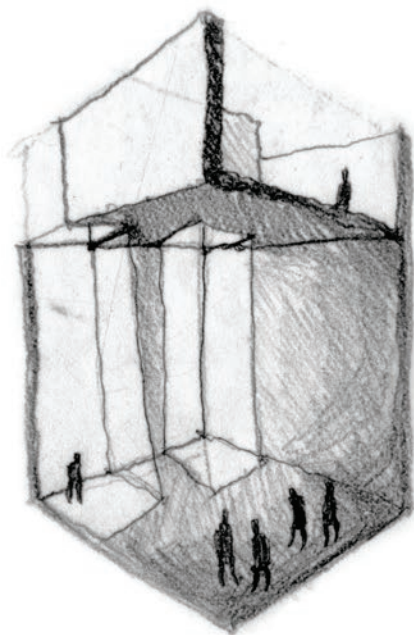
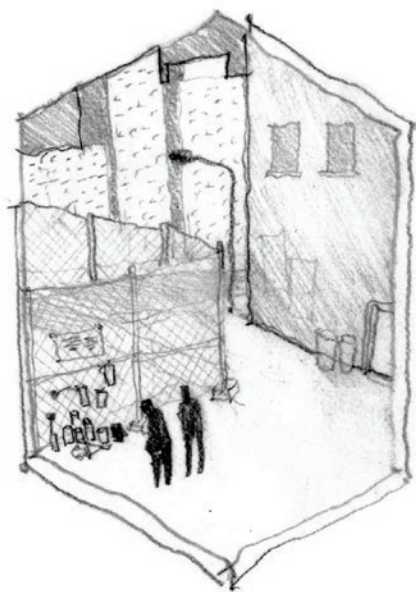
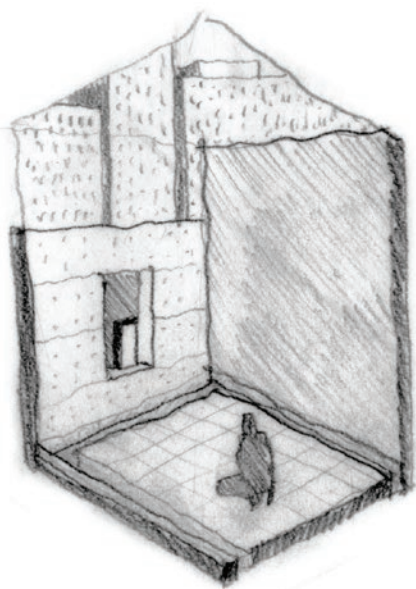
**Private Workspace** – A realm of personal control, ritual, and advancement, the private workspace represents a comfortableness and personally sacred space. Full control and “fit” within the space creates a temple like atmosphere and implies an almost monastic devotion to the furthering of ones pursuits.

**Consuming the Cubicle** – An impersonal, repetitive, generic workspace that is not tailored to the user. The individual becomes part of a collective whole and de-sanctifies the space and practice.

**The Natural Vista** – The act of architecture allowing man to rise above the natural world. From this point, man surveys the natural landscape and situates himself within a large point of view. Both humbling and inspirational, the natural vista serves as a point of departure for the sacred experience.

**Vista to the Accomplishments of Man** – Equally important to the natural vista is the opposite: the vista to the accomplishments of man. This view looks upon the city or constructs of man and allows the viewer again to view all that which is human.



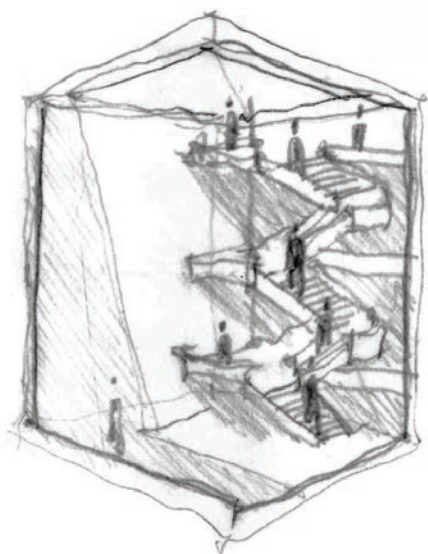
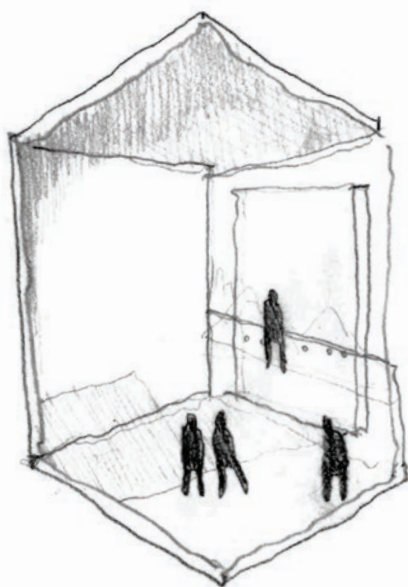
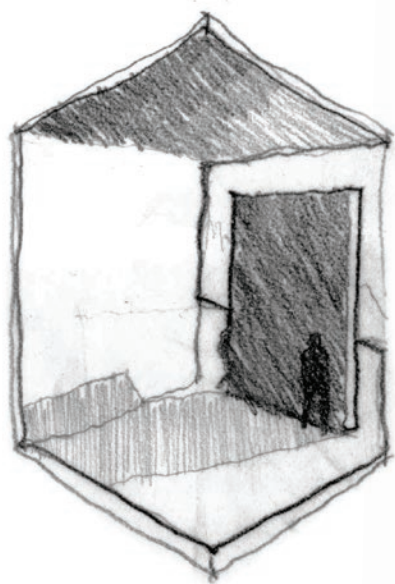


**Personal Shrine** – A personal object that resonates symbolically with one's inclinations, feelings, or opinions. A place where personal meaning is strong and individual resonance occurs, through conventional or unconventional manifestation. An edifice or object that is created for a symbolic reason.

**Impromptu Shrine** – The instant manifestation of symbolic sacred as a result of tragedy. Shrines appear overnight at street corners, chain-link fences, steps, and other nondescript locations. Their spontaneous happening does not belittle their deep, emotional sacred value.

**Selective Light** – This image highlights an interesting symbolic charge that the simple control of light can bring. Specific lighting symbolically highlights the individual figure. Connotations of an alternate experience or sensation are applied to that figure. Additionally, the light interacts with the scale of the space and creates a humbling, transcendental atmosphere.

**Generalized Light** – Removal of the light ultimately alters the space in every way. The removal of the apertures alters the space in a generic way but what ultimately happens is a shift in sensation for the figures and the atmosphere of the space. Suddenly there is a shift from a transcendental platform to a space of sterile alienation.



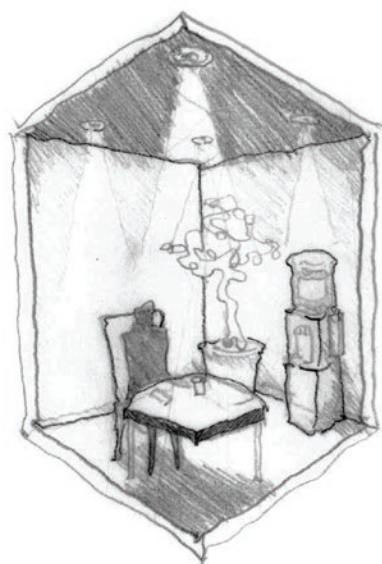
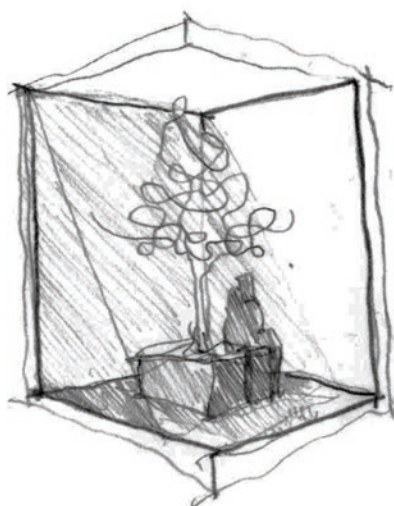
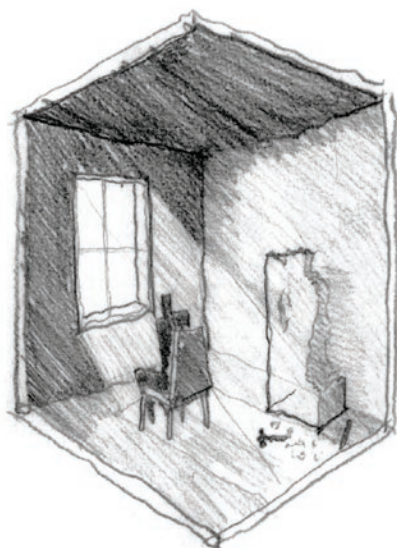
**Mystery, Complexity, Curiosity** – The desire to create an architecture, beyond face value, that was intellectually complex and fulfilling permeated the historical masters and forerunners of the architectural discourse. It inspires user experience and encourages a deeper understanding and experiencing of an architectural space. An architecture that inherently resonates with the human scale: space that can be universally impactful. Historically these have been the sacred spaces: religious spaces.

**Literal Transparency** – An architecture with no contradictions or complexities, extreme literal transparency has permeated architectural design at all levels of value. Easily digestible, one-off architecture provides the public with iconic architecture that acts as pure symbolism and iconography. No complexity or depth results in an architecture that drives complacency and boredom.

**Processional Enlightenment** – The act of sequence, procession, and pilgrimage is one that is central to the idea of sacred. Religiously, pilgrimage has shown to be a literal and allegorical representation of growth and sequence through a space and through life or experience.

**Stairway to Consumption** – Today's sequence has been simplified and streamlined. Its purpose now is capital driven, allowing a pilgrimage or procession through stores, images, and consumption. Shopping malls provide a sequential procession through a host of capitalist enterprises and the meaning and personal sacrifice or growth is lost.





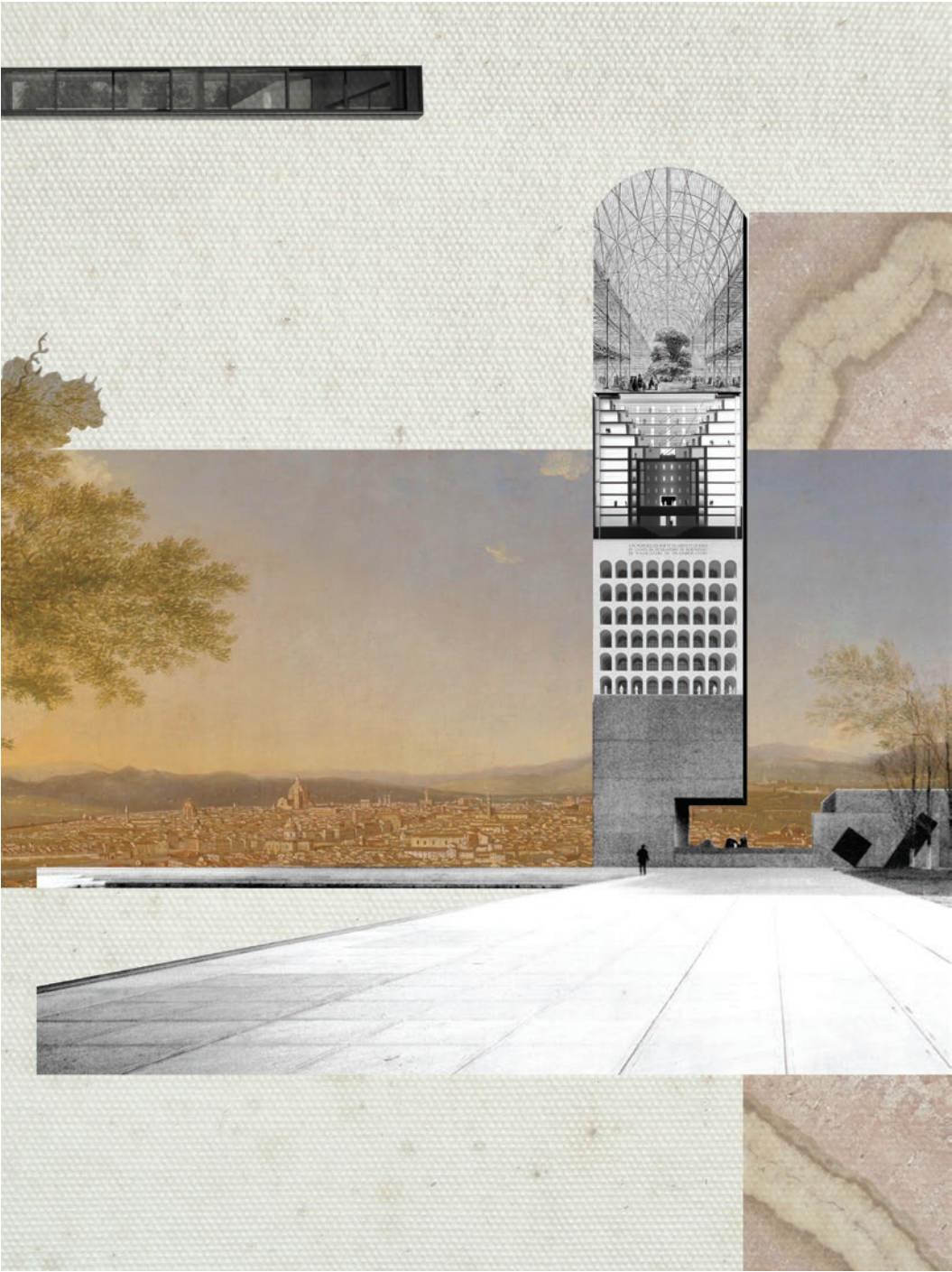
**The Individual** – Sacred to the individual. The individual process, the strife, the growth, the success, the failure. An experience that's ultimately intrinsic to the human condition and ultimate in priority.

**The Collective** – Sacred to the collective. A collective collaboration of the socially accepted sacred. The sharing of a collective goal and the collaborative effort to bring that value to fruition. Equally important and necessary in society.

**Natural Sanctuary** – A simple case of grounding, that allows for a re-orientation and removal. A small intimate sanctuary that can serve as a temporary release from one's condition. Instances of this appear historically in the form of courtyards and site location.

**Artificial Sanctuary** – Due to the lack of this true natural connection in today's reality, an artificial sanctuary and connection has been forged. Superficial connections and relation to nature appear in contemporary construction in effort to bring the natural back into the built environment.





# THE COLLECTIVE SACRED VS. THE INDIVIDUAL SACRED

Perhaps the most interesting aspect in the understanding of “sacred” is the opposing and contradictory, collective sacred and individual sacred. Fundamentally, the collective sacred represents the conventional notions of sacred and all of their associated values and characteristics, while the individual sacred constitutes a construction of personal values, goals, and a contemplative atmosphere. The former has a strong conventional aesthetic, while the latter is essentially blurred still, where a multitude of interpretations and subjectivity can come into play.

The contradictory notions and scales of sacred space are fundamental to a truly successful contemporary sacred space, architecture, and experience. The mediation between the two allows for an atmosphere of sanctuary and retreat to be mixed with a feeling of community and collective, therefore providing a setting for a multitude of preferences, tendencies, and exchanges. Equally, the opportunity to engage in multiple scales of sacred experience is readily available.

Collective sacred is large scale, heavy, powerful, humbling. Commonly, it is stereotomic and built from the earth. The scale, height, and light are meant to have humbling effects on the humans who visit them and provide them with a closer connection to their God or gods. Collective sacred can be classified under a conventional interpretation or understanding of what sacred

*fig 01: The Temple of the  
Collective, Maxwell Baum, 2016*





can be. It just simply is the first thing that comes to mind when questioned about ones perception of what sacred can be or is.

The individual sacred is a construct of today's widening scope of inclusivity. Yet this is not a bad thing, as in to accept for the sake of accepting everything. People have become, or rather maintained, their spirituality and devotion but allocated it to avenues aside from traditionally religious ones. With this in mind, "normal" spaces begin to hold much more power and allow them to better serve their users individual needs. Due to the personal nature of this interaction, a generalized aesthetic is hard to decree. But aspects of design may have shared qualities. Careful attention to form, material, atmosphere, human scale and proportion are key to creating a space that is equally reactive and relative to its occupant or occupants.

Additionally, the individual space can often become a sort of lived space. It becomes customizable and unique. It does not need to be stark, clean and empty, but can be full of character, personal touch and clutter. It can have a disorganized beauty in that everything is exactly where it needs to be, not necessarily out of site: organized chaos. It is all the product of the one who uses it.

*fig 01: The Temple of the  
Individual, Maxwell Baum, 2016*



# ATMOSPHERE OF THE SACRED

“The passage of time; light, shadow, and transparency; color phenomenon, texture, material and detail all participate in the complete experience of architecture ... Only architecture can simultaneously awaken all the senses - all the complexities of perception”

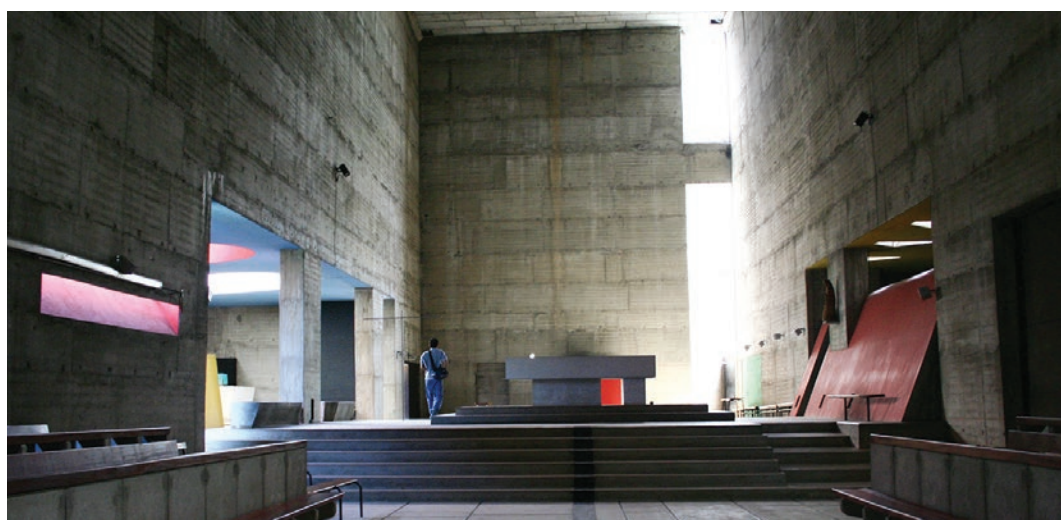
-- Steven Holl

Building on the concept of phenomenological and atmospheric architecture (Holl, Zumthor, Pallasmaa), sacred architecture should strive to connect to its users on an emotional level. The creation of an atmosphere within a project is a powerful tool: it imbues it with a soul. By careful choice of material, for texture, temperature, reverberation, etc., a project can begin to take on symbolic and atmospheric meaning. A cold, smooth concrete, a heavy, rough stone, warm, grained wood, or a slice of ice glass plane. These materials, in a way, transcend simple materials. They control the space; they are the space, not simply constructs of it.

*fig. 01: Jewish Museum, Berlin,  
Daniel Libeskind, 1999*

By creating this level of depth within the confines of a built enclosure, an atmosphere unique to the space can be created. This atmosphere is the curator of the experience and the space. This is what separates a sacred architecture from a building. Today’s “architecture”, en masse, is merely “Building” and “construction”. They do not strive to be anything more than enclosed space and economy. They are just space to inhabit. Sacred space and atmospheric architecture is space to be felt and experienced. It is space to live in; space to exist.





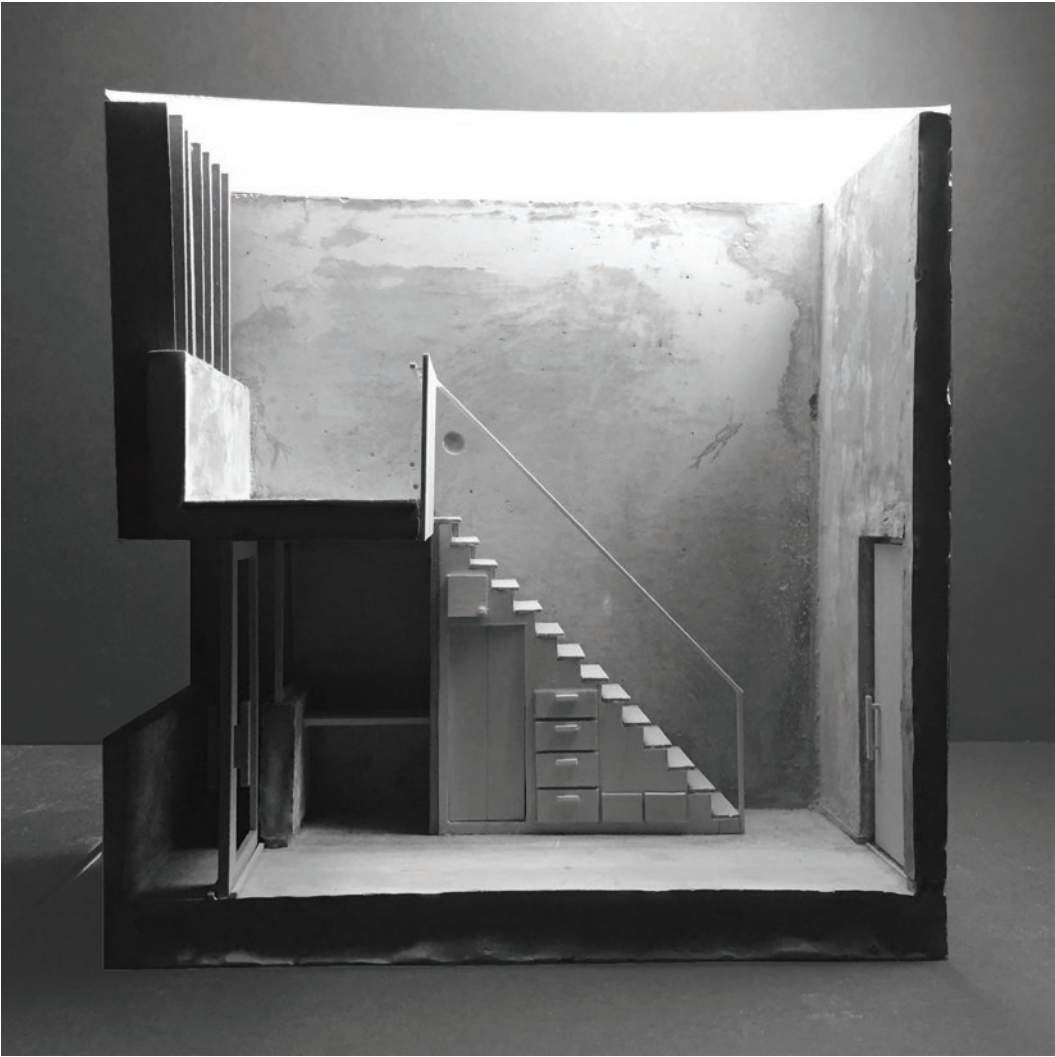
# INEFFABILITY AND L'ESPACE INDICIBLE

“Work reaches a maximum of intensity, when it has been made with the best quality of execution, when it has reached perfection ... When this happens the places start to radiate. They radiate in a physical way and determine what i call ineffable space, that is to say, a space that does not depend on dimensions but on the quality of its perfection. It belongs to the dominion of the ineffable, of that which cannot be said.”

-- Le Corbusier

*fig 01: La Tourette Exterior, Le Corbusier, 1960*

*fig 02: La Tourette Interior, Le Corbusier, 1960*



# PROJECT

This project will be a non-religious sacred space. A place for worship. A place for ritual. A place for devotion. A place for the individual. And a place for the collective.

This project will explore the concept of sacredness by creating architecture to house an educational institution. The program allows for ritual and routine, a strong sense of collective and individual space, and the opportunity to engage with multiple communities. Living space, large public space, and classrooms are some of the programmatic needs. Additionally, the idea set forth by Louis Kahn about a building being, “**a world within a world**,” will be considered in ultimate attention. This project will construct a unique and alternate world within the confines of its space, fit with an atmospheric, symbolic, and humanistic characteristic. It wishes to be both introspective and extrospective, just as the individuals and communities that use it are. Its achievements and principles are an echo of those that are to be obtained by its users.

This project aims to impact the individual as well as the collective. This must be done by contrasting, not rejecting, one with the other. It features space for both the collective and the individual: it provides solitude as well as community. A balance of needs.

The profanely sacred, and the ineffable mundane.

*fig. 01: Individual Sanctuary  
Model, Maxwell Baum, 2016*





# SITE

The site chosen for this intervention is Florence, Italy. The city features a rich history of sacred architecture, but all from a religious standpoint. To contrast this, in building in this site, the project will cast all of the sacred city as the profane, and within its walls, define a new sacred. Two sites have been selected, one across the Arno just east of the Ponte alle Grazie and the other within the city fabric just north of the Mercato Centrale on the site of an abandoned monastery.

The River Site (01) provides a monastery like “outside-ness” and more flexibility of design. The site itself will be on an L shaped site and the adjacent unused garden space on the bank of the river. Similar to ancient monasteries, it is constructed on the fringe of the city, perhaps to spur more coming development as a community develops around it.

*fig 01: Map of Florence, Maxwell  
Baum, 2016*

The City Site (02) is located well within the city fabric. The site was once a monastery but now lies abandoned and boarded up. Thickly woven into the fabric of the city, there are multiple exterior forces to be dealt with, as well as the existing structure and organization of the site to consider.



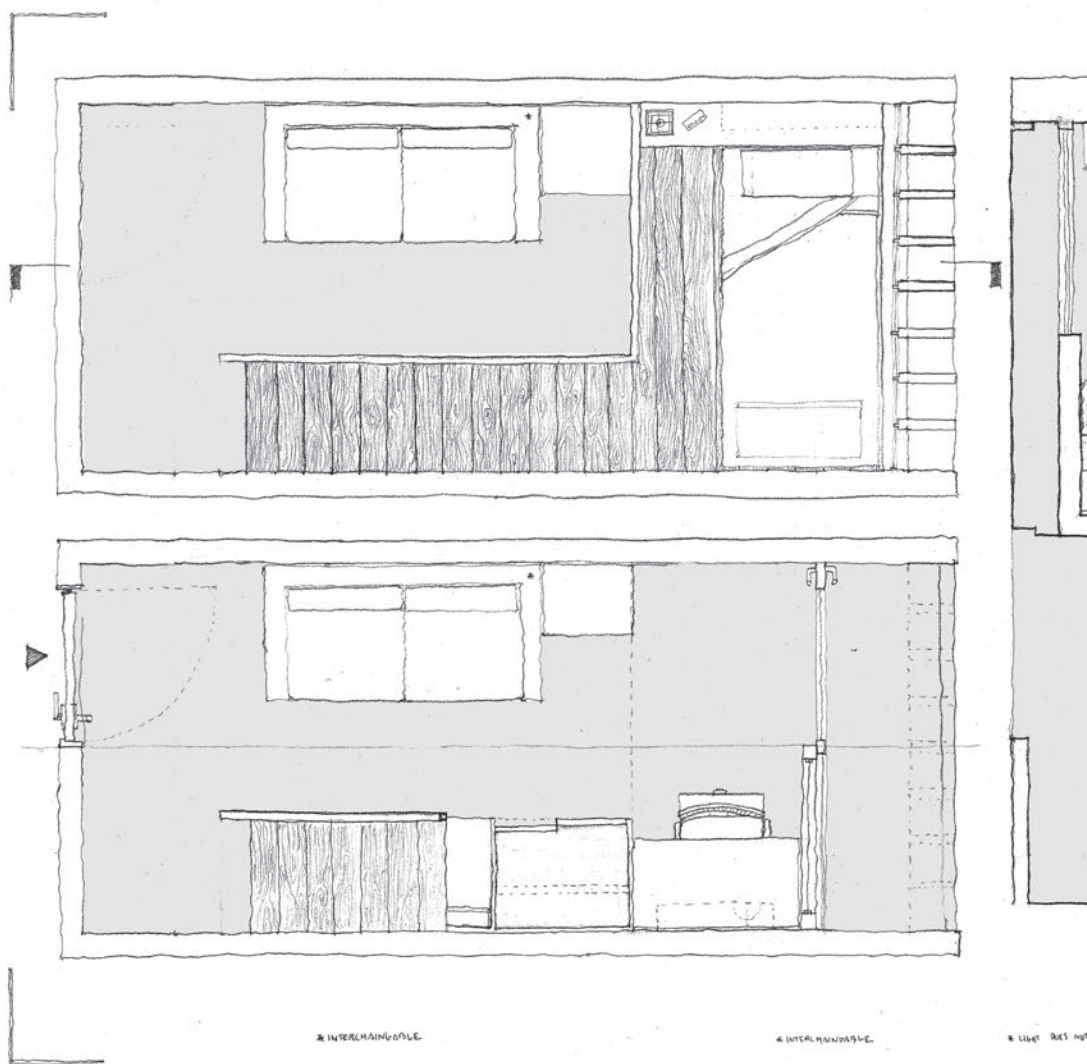


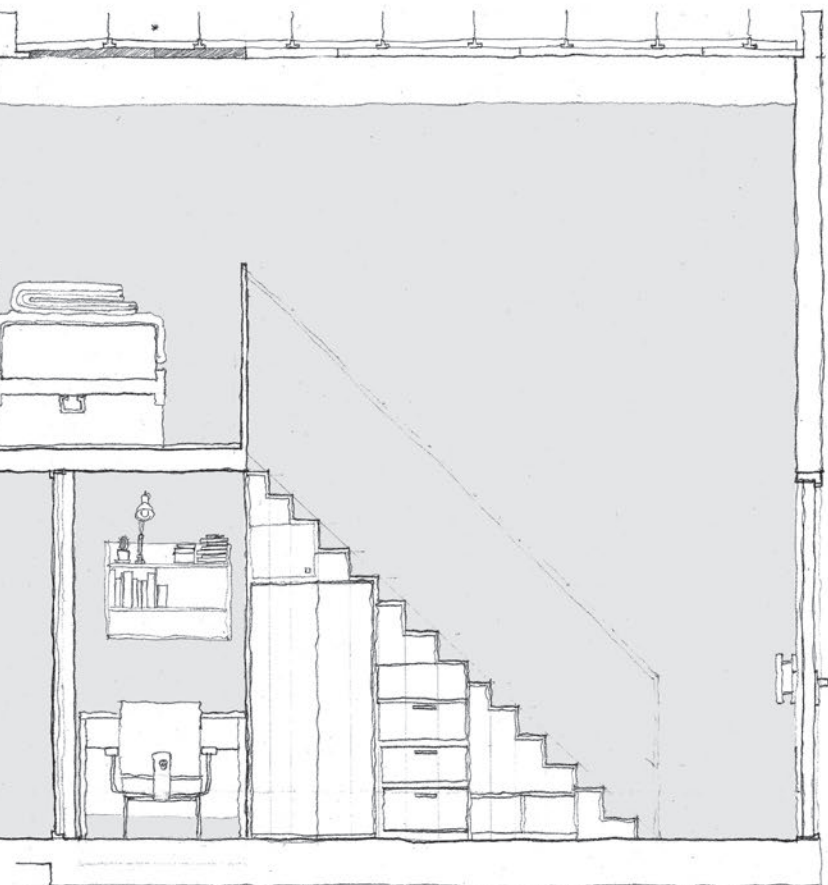
*fig 01: Site 01, Maxwell Baum,  
2016*



*fig 02: Site 02, Maxwell Baum,  
2016*







# INDIVIDUAL SANCTUARY

THE INDIVIDUAL SANCTUARY WILL PROVIDE THE USER WITH A SACRED SPACE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL. IT IS A DOUBLE HEIGHT SPACE (16 FT) BY 16 FT (6) X 8 FT (4). THE SPACE IS DOUBLE HEIGHT TO ALLOW FOR CONTEXTUAL REFERENCE (HEIGHT OF SURROUNDINGS) AS WELL AS ALLOW FOR A LEFT SPACE. THE PRIMARY LEVEL OF THE SPACE CREATES A SPACE FOR WORKING. THE SPACE IS DOUBLE WITH A STAIR OUT THIS CAN BE REMOVED TO ADD SPACE FOR ITEMS OF SIGNIFICANCE (E: BOOKS, THOUGHTFUL TABLE, HIGH CHAIR, OPERATIONAL TABLE) THE DESK LEANS AT A SCALE FOR REWARD WORK (HIGH CHAIR) WITH THE MAIN SPACE MAY SERVE AS A COMMUNICATIVE SPACE. THE TEMPORAL QUALITY OF SACRED VS. PROFANE WITHIN THIS SACRED SPACE ONLY WITH SEVEN CHAIRS AND ANOTHER CHAIR. THIS MARKS THE PROSESSOR. THE MAIN AND THE LEFT. THIS AND MAIN REMAIN TOGETHER AND A WORK MATERIAL. THE DOUBLE HEIGHT SPACE WILL BE IN CONTRAST AND WILL BE LET THROUGH REFLECTED LIGHT AND CEILING. THIS WILL ALLOW FOR NATURAL LIGHT TO PENETRATE INTO THE SPACE.

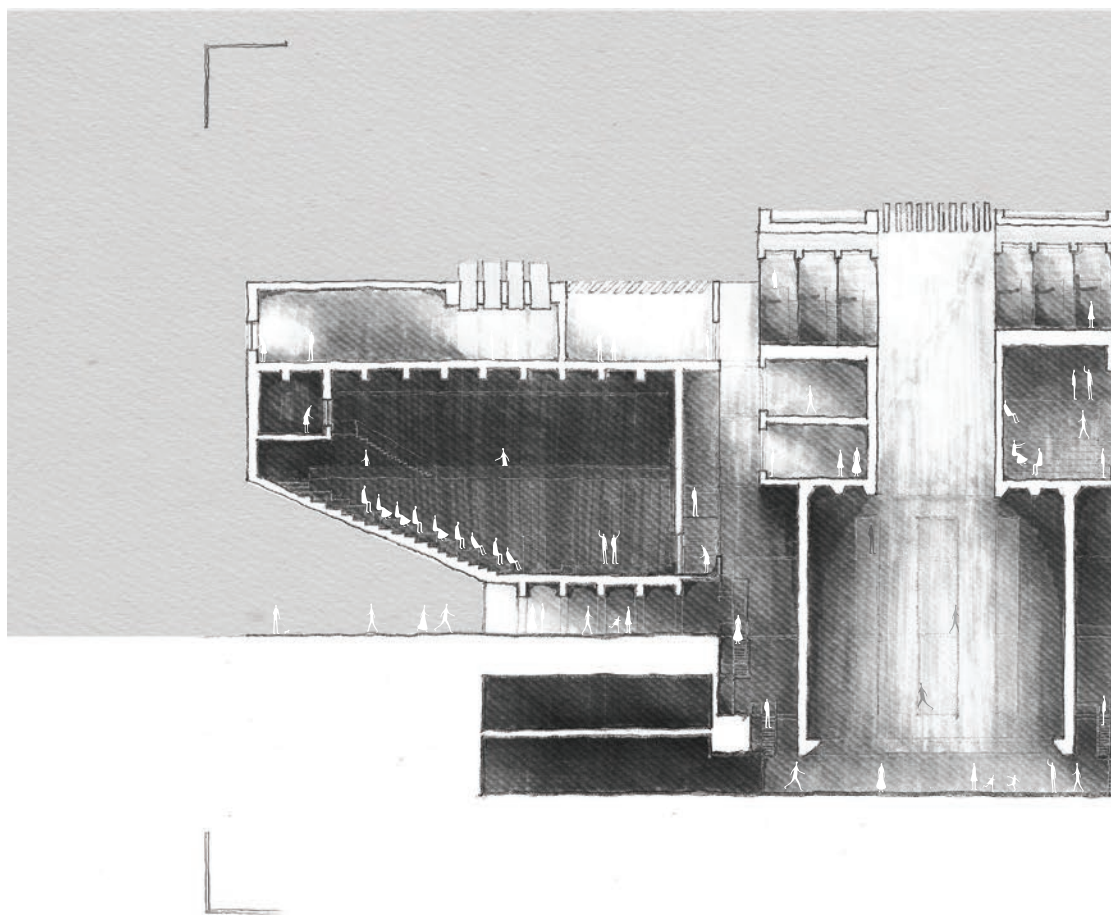
Q2: SPECULATIVE INDIVIDUAL SANCTUARY

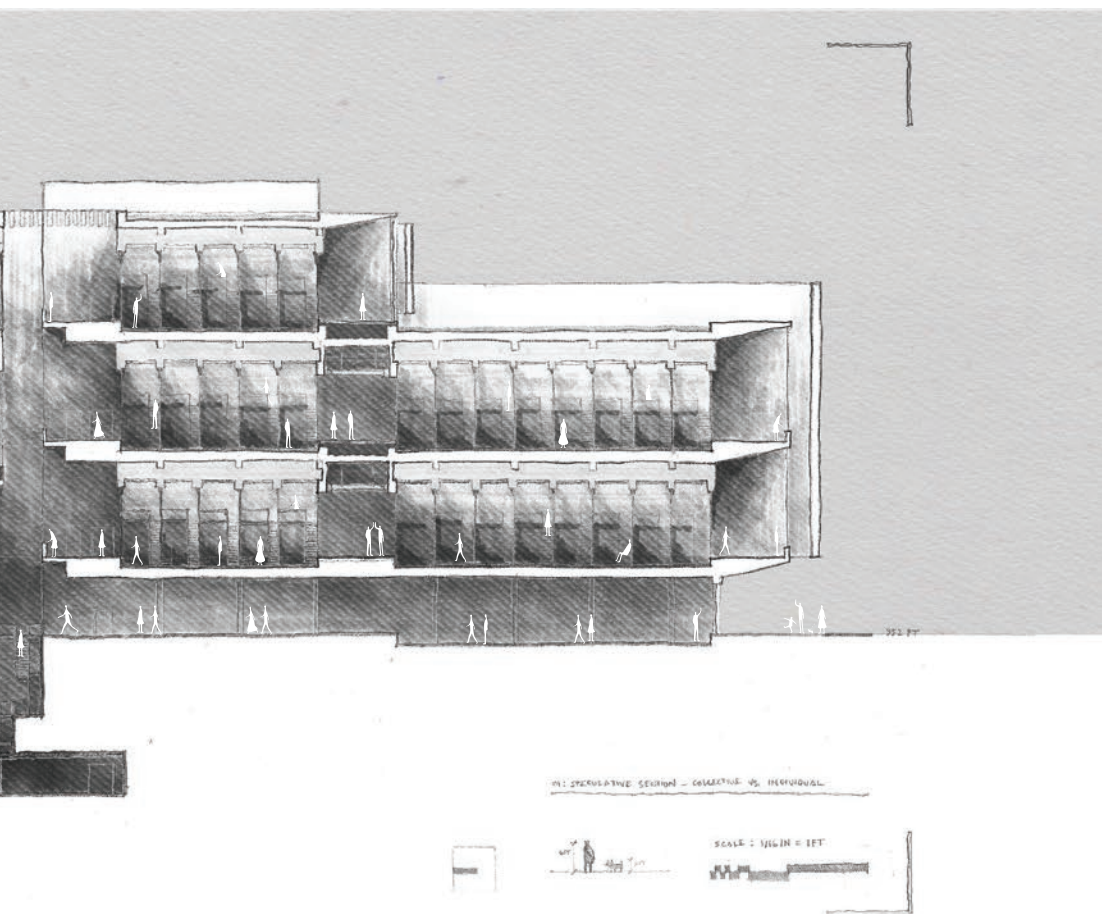
SCALE : 1/4" = 1 FT



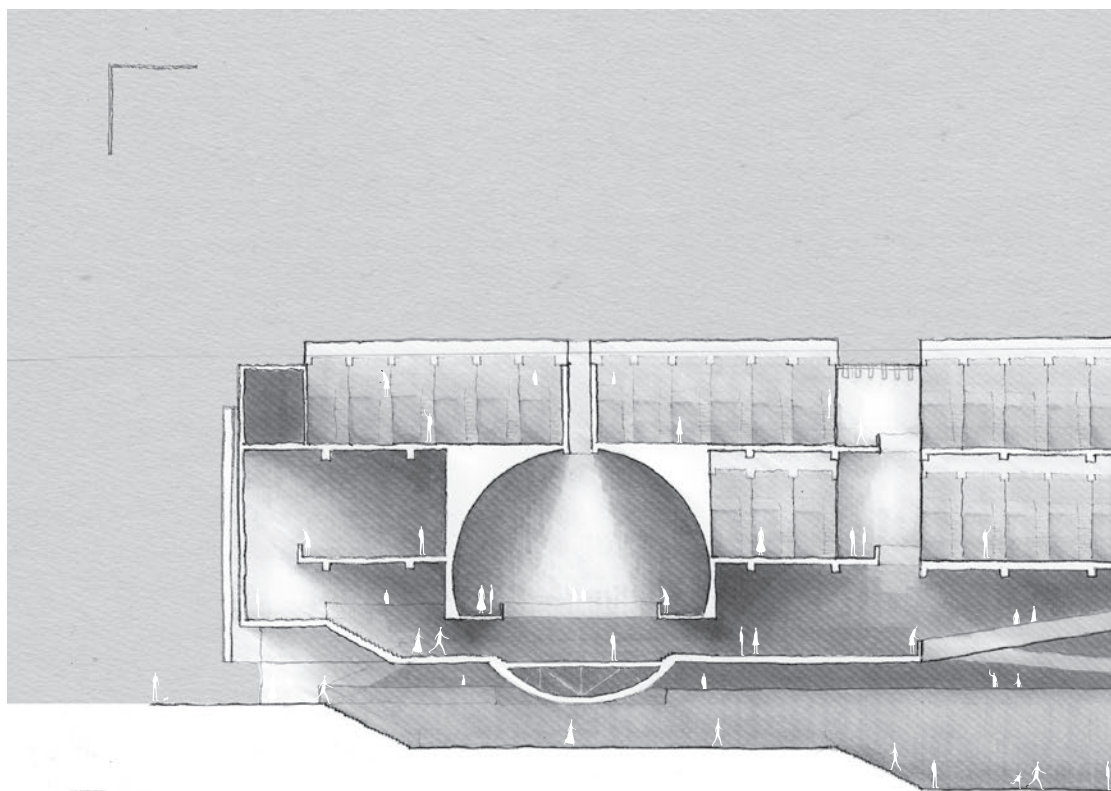
fig 01: Individual Sanctuary Plan and Section, Maxwell Baum, 2016

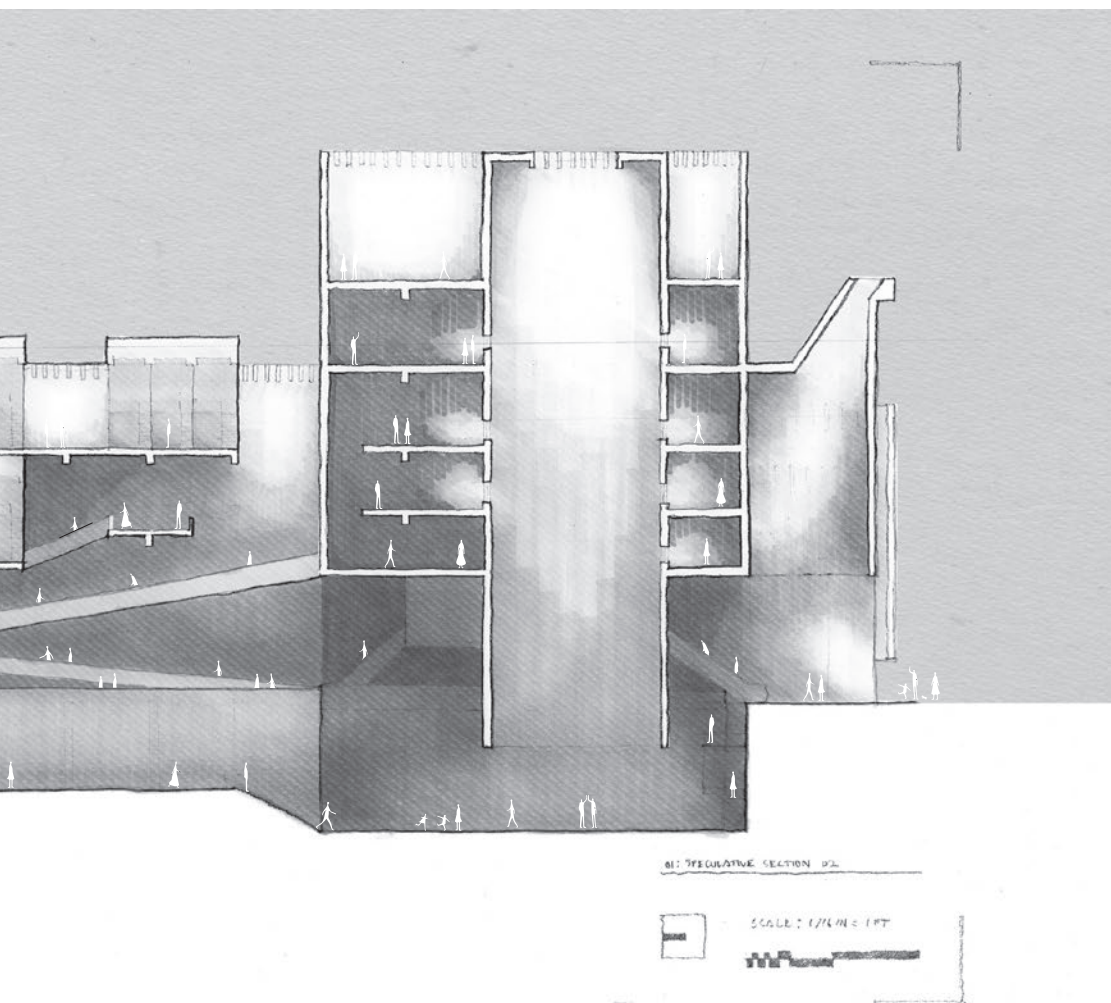






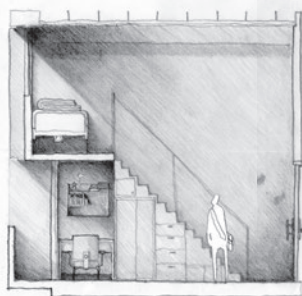
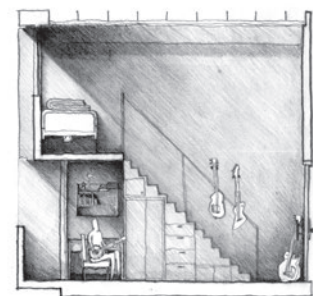
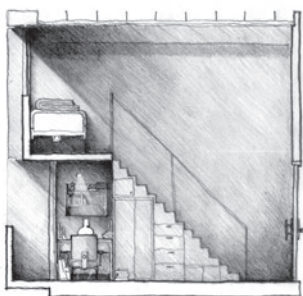
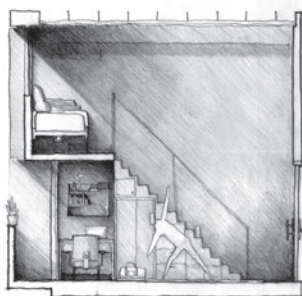
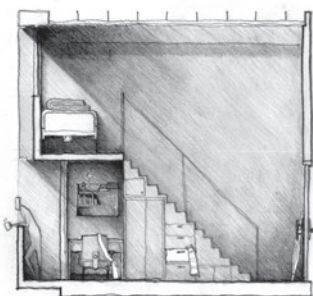
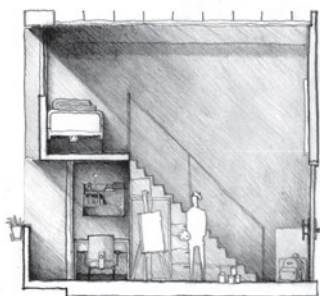
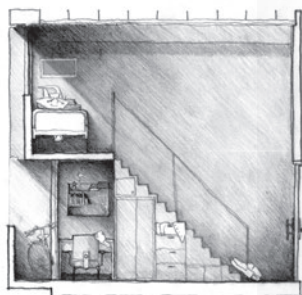
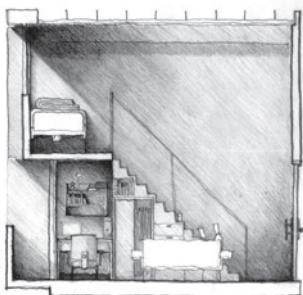
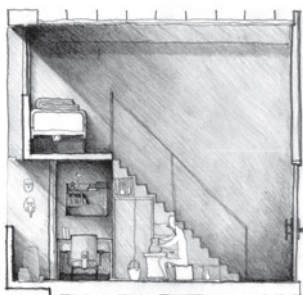
*fig 01: Speculative Section 01,  
Maxwell Baum, 2016*



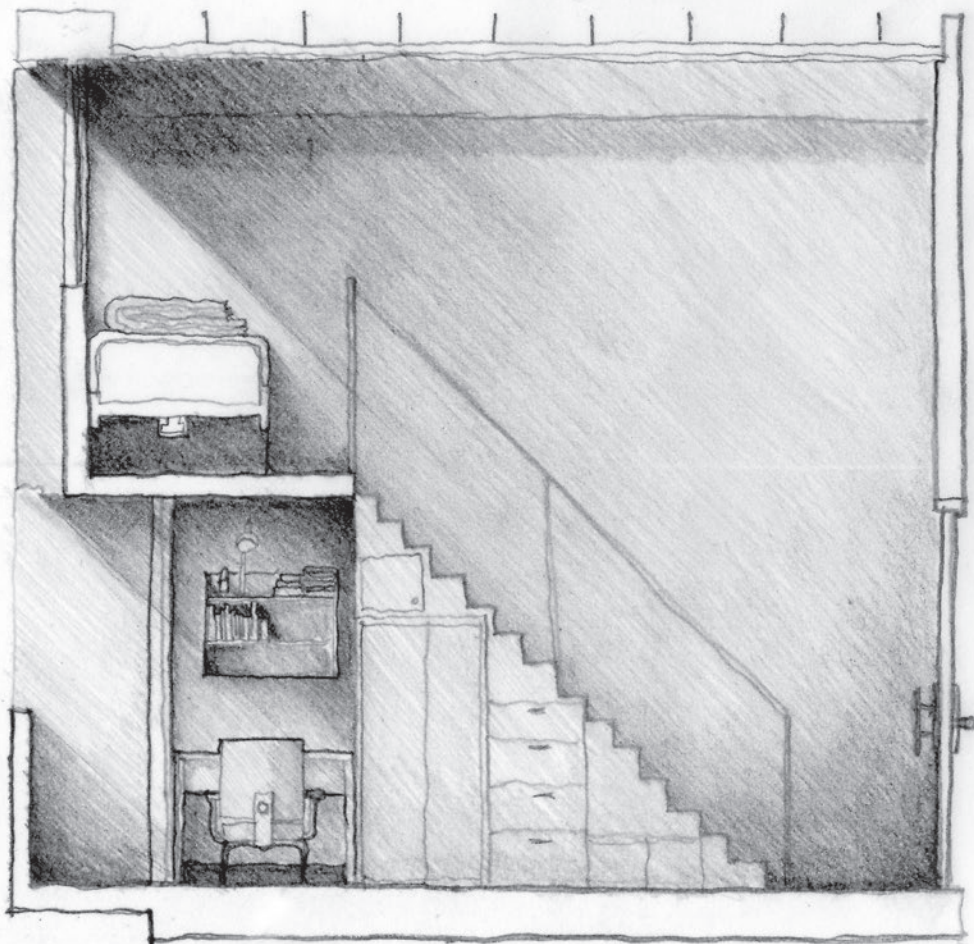


*fig 01: Speculative Section 02,  
Maxwell Baum, 2016*



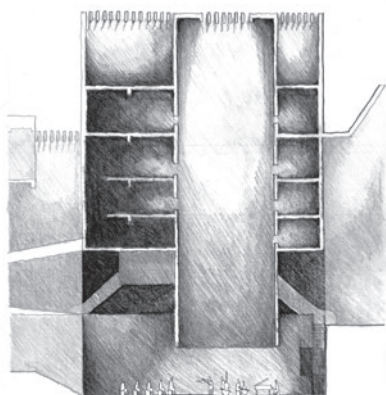
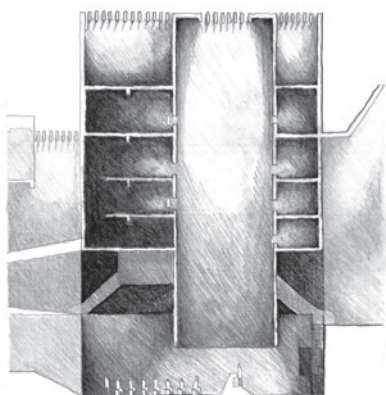
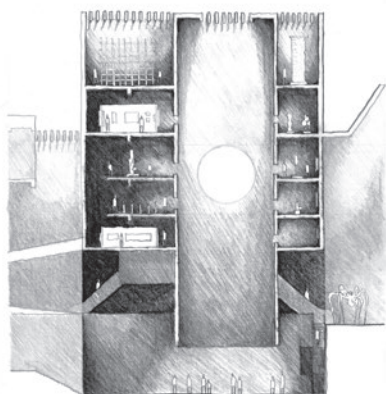
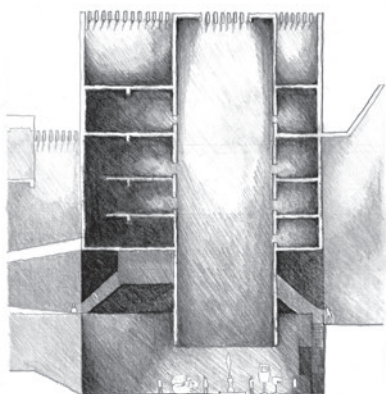
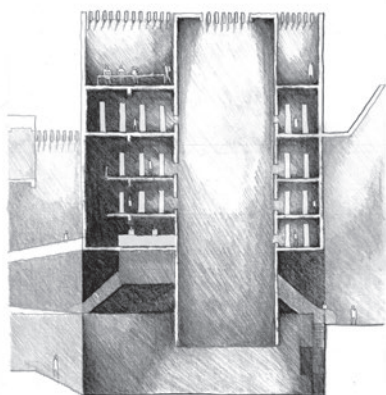
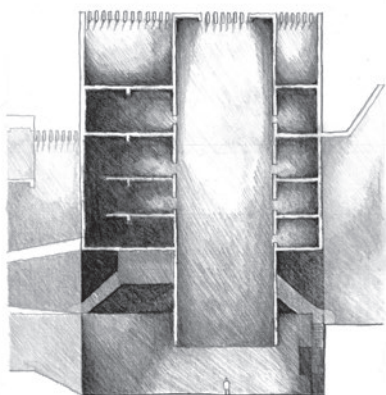


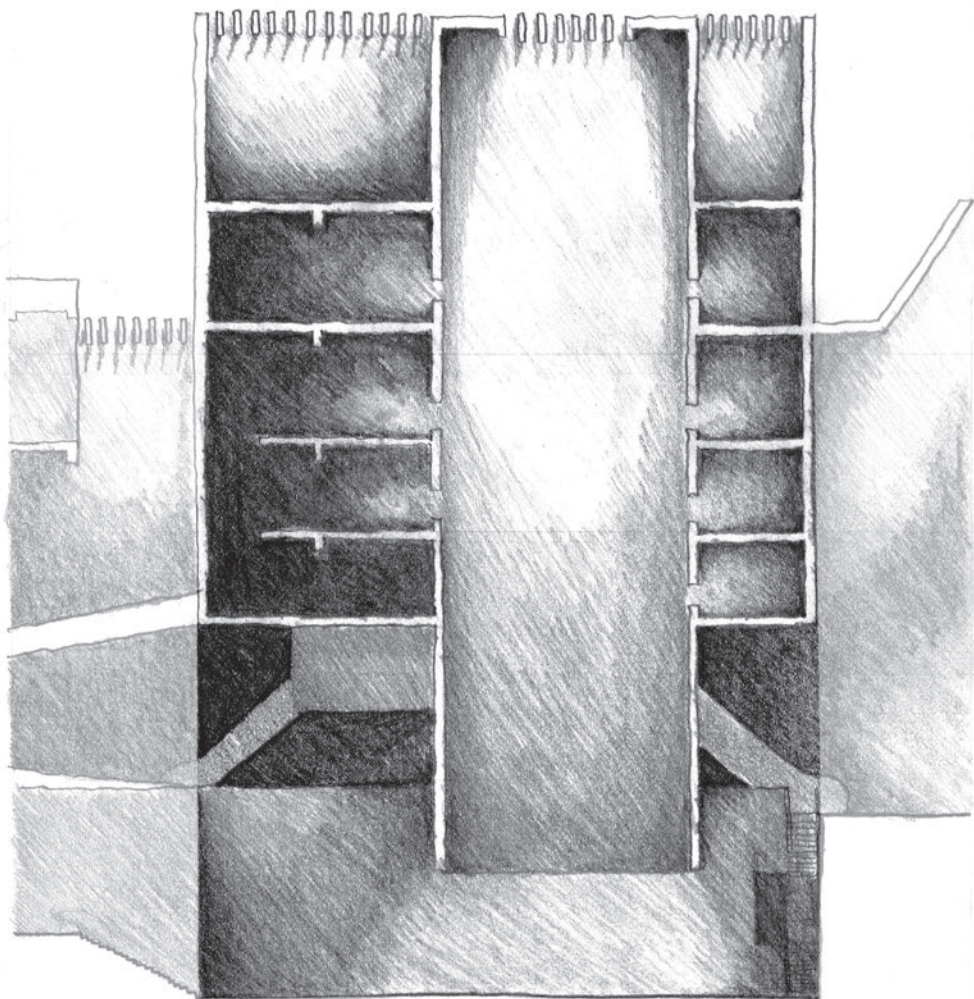




*fig. 01: Individual Sanctuary Study  
Matrix, Maxwell Baum, 2106*

*fig. 02: Individual Sanctuary Pencil  
Rendering, Maxwell Baum, 2016*

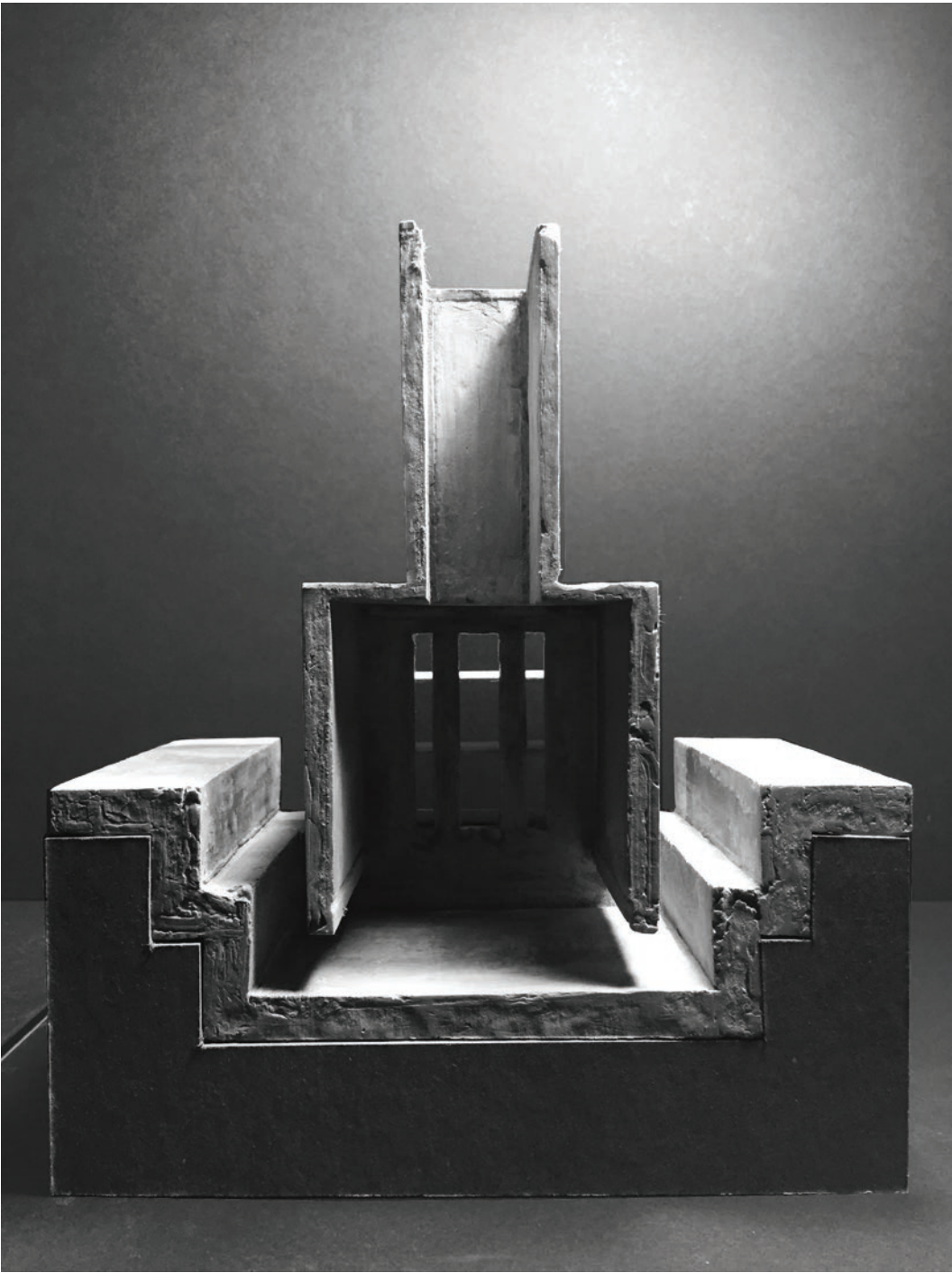




*fig. 01: Collective Sacred Study  
Matrix, Maxwell Baum, 2016*

*fig. 02: Collective Sacred Pencil  
Rendering, Maxwell Baum, 2016*





*fig. 01: Collective Sacred Model,  
Maxwell Baum, 2016*



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